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Chairman: Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal)  
(Vice-Chairman)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

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Mr. UMBA-di-LUTETE (Zaire) (interpretation from French): In the statement we made in this Committee during the debate on the item relating to the conclusion of a treaty on the non-use of force in international relations, we stressed at length the importance of all matters relating to peace. No one in this room will dispute the fact that peace and disarmament affect the very survival of mankind, and this accounts for the interest shown in this question by all the nations on earth.

If we all so naturally aspire to peace, it is because peace is one of the essential conditions for happiness and true international co-operation. Yet it is not possible to speak of a real and lasting peace as long as we are surrounded by formidable stockpiles of weapons and other weapons are being tested and manufactured. Peace on our planet cannot be achieved without disarmament.

As science and technology develop, types of weapons become more numerous, more sophisticated, more devastating and more deadly than ever. This only serves to increase the dangers threatening mankind and to heighten our collective responsibility for peace. Mankind as a whole has fully grasped the grave threat posed to it by this accumulation of terrible destructive forces; voices are constantly being raised denouncing the folly of the arms race and calling for disarmament.

Unfortunately, the initiatives taken to this end are, generally speaking, rather naive, unrealistic and lacking in coherence. But whatever criticisms may be levelled against these approaches, we can only hope that their very existence is a heartening, if perhaps distant, prelude to broader and more specific disarmament prospects.

For the moment, however, these approaches and initiatives, despite their number, seem to us to be too specific and superficial to hold out hope of producing appropriate political solutions which would rid mankind of the fear of its own annihilation. It is within a global political vision that we should

(Mr. Umba-di-Lutete, Zaire)

tackle this question if we really wish to safeguard peace and serve the interests of mankind. This is why all the items now being discussed by this Committee could, and in our opinion should, be considered as different aspects of one and the same fundamental question -- that is, peace through disarmament.

Since weapons are becoming more and more devastating and deadly every day, partial solutions to disarmament cannot adequately meet our expectations. Thus, the solution involving a reduction of forces is altogether unreliable, because the number of divisions is not an adequate criterion for a correct appraisal of force levels. At the time of arrows and spears, this approach was defensible; it is no longer so in an era of rockets and the atom.

Moreover, restriction to a particular type of weapons or a particular number of devices and the prohibition of other types of weapons cannot be regarded as satisfactory solutions, since, here again, technological advances will mean that quality will make up for quantity. Moreover, what type of weapons are not devastating and deadly in the modern age? As can be seen, the danger and threat that we seek to eliminate or at any rate reduce would remain present.

For a number of years, we believed, or were led to believe, that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which numerous countries have acceded, constituted a possible solution. We must face facts and acknowledge that this is not the case. Actually, this Treaty is profoundly unjust and essentially selfish because it has the effect of putting certain States in a more privileged position than others. No other interpretation is possible, since the ultimate effect of the Treaty is that the nuclear-weapon States would continue to keep such weapons while modernizing and expanding their arsenals whereas other States would be prohibited from entering the exclusive nuclear-Power club on the basis of what principles should we permit certain States to have something denied to others? Does this not, moreover, create a category of protector States which, through possible blackmail, would boss the world? As the majority of States can only reject such a protectorate and, over and above the problem of security for their citizens, there is also a problem of sovereignty, the results have not been slow in forthcoming. Other countries, although not nuclear Powers, have joined the atomic club, thus bringing about a proliferation of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Umba-di-Lutete, Zaire)

Clearly, then, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is obsolete, because, as could not be presumed from the good intentions of the first atomic Powers, it has incited other countries to arm more heavily, so as to try to catch up, or at any rate carry an air of conviction in this area.

Consequently, unless we are to revert to the era of spears and arrows, partial and limited solutions cannot provide us with the appropriate response. Some have proposed and continue to propose, in good faith, the establishment of denuclearized zones. This is a tempting and apparently easy solution which could be summarized as follows: "You have nuclear weapons; all right, go ahead and kill each other. We do not have any and do not wish to have any. Consequently, we forbid such weapons to be introduced into our zone." Such an approach comes up against the same considerations of principle that we advanced earlier. Why should a particular zone be doomed to death and not another? As can be seen, such an approach reveals a flagrant lack of solidarity, for disarmament and peace are matters which concern all of us. No one should be left out of the picture.

(Mr. Umba-di-Lutete, Zaire)

Then, what guarantee would we have that irregular units would not shoot us in the back and introduce prohibited weapons into the protected zones?

No, indeed, if denuclearized zones are established, they should represent only one stage, a stage which should in any case include all types of weapons. Failing these conditions, it seems to us pointless to become involved in other unrealistic projects.

When we call for peace zones, we should have real peace in mind, a peace without discrimination and without subterfuge, not peace zones from which only the great Powers would be excluded. Otherwise, we should be lacking in honesty, to the detriment of the peace to which we all aspire. The spiral of fear or legitimate self-defence do not by themselves account for the arms race. We must also remember the will to power and a certain predilection for aggression on the part of some countries, which are other causes of the arms race, the evils of which can never be condemned enough.

These are not simply confined to the danger of destruction that weighs upon mankind, or to the loss of a few hundred billion dollars to the world community which must as a result renounce satisfying some of its basic needs, such as its struggle against poverty.

The arms race makes us waste precious time, which, instead of being used to improve the living conditions of man on earth, is used to manufacture deadly and destructive weapons.

There is another repugnant aspect of this arms race: some rich countries can squander colossal fortunes without jeopardizing the growth of their economies, though, if they abstained from such folly, their populations would benefit from more useful projects. Others, on the other hand, which are forced to follow this pattern to ensure the security of their populations, become more and more involved in adventurous undertakings which render the living conditions of their inhabitants even more precarious.

Such a situation illustrates the selfishness which characterizes relations among States because, while some can squander their resources as they wish, others can barely obtain their basic needs.

Despite these grave dangers and these shocking truths, the steps to achieve peace through disarmament remain timid and suspect.

(Mr. Umba-di-Lutete, Zaire)

It must be realized that as long as the world continues to manufacture arms, disarmament will remain hypothetical and unrealistic. All these terrifying weapons are not intended to be put in museums. We are told to trust the wisdom of man who will certainly not allow such apocalyptic forces to come into play. But this is a dangerous game to play. Would it not be wiser not to manufacture these weapons so as to avoid the temptation to use them? Thus, we think that if we really aspire to peace, disarmament should be considered in a global manner. It should concern all peace-loving nations because each of them has a certain strength it can use.

Consequently, if disarmament is to be plausible and realistic, it should go through the following stages.

The first stage would be to prohibit the manufacture of new weapons. We are already inundated by the existing ones, and it is certain that the manufacture of new ones would lead to suicide.

The second stage would consist in the destruction of all the stockpiles of nuclear and mass destruction weapons existing at present.

Finally at the third stage, the other conventional weapons would be destroyed. All these stages should be carried through under effective international control and guarantees.

We realize that this is an ambitious plan, maybe too ambitious, and maybe even utopian. Yet the salvation of mankind lies precisely in this apparently utopian vision.

There are too many obstacles on the path to disarmament not to realize the difficulty of the task. Some warlike States would not easily give up stockpiles of weapons which are the instruments of their policy. What is more, could certain Powers easily desist from the armaments race without alienating their own societies and arms industries? We should remember in this context that the arms trade is one of the most flourishing activities.

It will be difficult to oppose such interests because for certain States arms is a most profitable export commodity which tends to safeguard their balance of payments.

There is also the vital fact that each State is responsible for the safety of

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its inhabitants and therefore cannot undertake total and complete disarmament without sound guarantees.

Thus we must recognize that the problem is not a simple one. It needs much thought and skill, but like all big undertakings, disarmament could not be carried out unless we surpass ourselves. If we fold our arms or keep to our obsolete approach, mankind is definitely doomed.

For our part, it goes without saying that since we trust human wisdom and lucidity, we believe such disarmament can be achieved. True disarmament is not merely disarmament of weapons, but a disarmament of minds and hearts. If minds do not change, then any disarmament will be futile and impossible.

In order to lay the sound basis for such an enterprise, we must support the idea of convening a special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The question is too important not to deserve such an honour and we hope that all delegations will heed this appeal.

Mr. YANKOV (Bulgaria): The problems of disarmament at this session have again acquired a prominent place in the agenda of this Committee. In our view this is a true reflection of the most urgent importance of disarmament with regard to world peace and security. It is also in line with the main peace-building function of the United Nations.

At this stage of the debate my delegation wishes to offer some general observations on two basic topics, first, on the pressing necessity to undertake effective and realistic measures, aimed at curbing the arms race, and secondly, on the world disarmament conference and the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament matters.

The continuation of the arms race remains the most alarming phenomenon in international relations and is a source of mistrust and tensions between States. The ceaseless piling of nuclear and conventional weapons and their subsequent sophistication, coupled with the development of weapons of mass destruction and the related headlong increase in the military budgets of States, harbours serious dangers for world peace and security while resting as an exceptionally heavy burden on the peoples' shoulders.



(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

I would not like to recall here the well-known data on the spiral rising military expenses of States for the last few years, as many speakers who preceded me furnished eloquent and convincing data on the subject. Suffice it to mention that this current year they are reaching astronomical and unprecedented levels. And the paradoxical thing here, in our view, is that all this takes place in a period when there is no declared war between States, a period which is generally considered as a time of peace.

There is no need to prove that the allocation of ever more important material and human resources for military needs is to the detriment not only of international security, but also of the economic and social development of nations. The subsequent results are all the more harmful now, when many countries around the world are going through a serious economic crisis and face severe difficulties in their balance of payments.

In these circumstances the sense of collective responsibility and the ever-increasing concern and awareness of world public opinion on the urgency and imperative necessity to end the arms race and its economic and social implications, have become an important factor in matters of disarmament. They have streamlined the popular pressure for accelerating the disarmament negotiations.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

On this point we agree with the Secretary-General that:

"It is essential that public opinion in the world should be actively aware of the dangers of present developments in the armaments field and should not adopt a defeatist or fatalistic attitude in the face of the appalling reality of the arms race. Mobilized public opinion has shown itself increasingly effective on a number of important issues in recent years. It seems to me that it is time that world public opinion became far more actively involved in the struggle for disarmament, which may well be a struggle for nothing less than human survival". (A/31/1/Add.1, p. 11)

Another important factor for curbing the arms race and promoting disarmament is the favourable climate created by the prevailing policy of détente. For it is beyond any doubt that disarmament and détente are closely interrelated. The consolidation of détente provides the most propitious conditions for the solution of international problems and creates mutual confidence and a sense of security which encourage any disarmament negotiations. On its part the progress in the field of disarmament stimulates further the process of détente. Therefore, to further develop the process of political détente and to give it an irreversible character is an objective necessity which enjoys general recognition. This perception is widely approved by public opinion in various countries and is being expressed in a number of declarations of eminent public figures and statesmen and voiced in numerous international fora among which may be mentioned the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Colombo, the Berlin Conference of the communist and workers parties of Europe, the Conference of the peace movement on disarmament held in Helsinki and expressed through tens of millions of signatures on the Stockholm Appeal of the World Peace Council launched this year.

In this nuclear age halting the arms race and removing the danger of nuclear conflicts is the challenge of the day. It is a matter of fact that the complete elimination of the nuclear danger presupposes the elimination of the nuclear weapons from the military arsenals and their destruction.

However, everyone is aware that the attainment of this goal, as well as general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, represents an extremely difficult and complex task which cannot be solved totally overnight.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

The disarmament problems in their complexity require first of all a comprehensive, flexible and realistic approach in selecting the main topics for negotiation and in determining priorities with regard to specific disarmament measures and the ways and means for achieving agreement. Taking into consideration the existing realities and the power structure of the international community, the whole negotiating process has to be carried out with utmost patience, gradually moving forward from mere arms limitation to a reduction of certain weapons with the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament. A maximalist approach based on the doctrine of "all or nothing", not only gives rise to frustration and pessimism but is altogether counterproductive, for it tends to overlook any opportunity for a partial solution which in the long run could bring about more tangible results. If this maximalist approach had been followed so far, we could not have achieved such important agreements as the Moscow Treaty on the Banning of Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer-Space and Under Water, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Treaty Prohibiting the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-bed, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction and other disarmament and arms control treaties.

It would not be difficult to visualize what the lack of those treaties would mean to international peace and security. That is why we would not like to see the significance of agreements even on partial measures on disarmament underestimated. Of course, like many other delegations we would also like to express our deep concern that we have not achieved the results we all hoped for, but at the same time we regard it as erroneous to underestimate the positive role of international agreements concluded so far on various issues of disarmament, a great number of which were negotiated at the CCD, whose valuable contribution in the field of disarmament deserves high appreciation. In our submission the bilateral agreements signed between the USSR and the United States of America, and particularly the SALT agreements, are also of great importance and we are hopeful that the current SALT talks will lead to positive results.

Now it is necessary, on the basis of the results already achieved in the field of disarmament, to take the next steps. We have to avail ourselves of every

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possibility that comes up in the process of relaxation of international tensions, both on a multilateral and on a bilateral basis, for achieving regional and general agreements for limitation of nuclear as well as conventional weapons, and also for undertaking new preventive measures which are indispensable, including the reduction of military budgets.

We agree therefore, with the distinguished First Deputy-Foreign Minister of the USSR, V. V. Kuznetsov, that:

"Here a broad field of activity has been opened up for all countries, large and small, developed and developing, nuclear and non-nuclear. It is not enough now to talk about disarmament or to make appeals for disarmament. We must turn from words to deeds...."

(A/C.1/31/PV.20, p. 11)

In this connexion my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Soviet Union for its most commendable initiative in submitting the Memorandum on the Questions of Ending the Arms Race and on Disarmament (A/31/232). As was stated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bulgaria during the general debate at this session,

"This Memorandum represents a broad programme for effective action by the United Nations aimed at curbing the arms race and achieving disarmament." (A/31/PV.14, p. 41)

The flexible and realistic approach to problems of disarmament requires also that legitimate preoccupations of national security be taken into account in order to avoid the apprehension of unilateral military advantages. It is therefore of crucial importance that disarmament measures should go hand in hand with realistic steps of building mutual confidence and détente.

In our view the quantitative limitations of nuclear weapons should be paralleled by respective agreements aimed at eliminating or even reducing the imminent danger that the development and manufacture of new and more sophisticated systems of such weapons will be undertaken. In line with this understanding we maintain that there should be an agreement for the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction, more destructive than those in existence, and also on the prohibition of new systems of such weapons.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

Turning now to some more specific measures which may substantiate the process of the cessation of the arms race and disarmament, we should like first of all to emphasize the urgent need to achieve nuclear disarmament, which, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, remains "of the first priority."

(A/31/1/Add.1, p. 11)

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

There is a widespread general conviction that the most important and pressing problem which confronts mankind nowadays is the halting of the nuclear arms race, which subsequently will allow to proceed towards a gradual reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and of their destruction thereupon. Thus, we will move closer to the solution of the historic task of completely eliminating the danger of a nuclear holocaust.

It has been generally agreed that an important step in the field of nuclear disarmament is the urgent cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests by all States, and the conclusion of a treaty designed to achieve a comprehensive test ban. To this effect resolution 3466 (XXX) referred to the hope expressed by the NPT Review Conference "that the nuclear-weapon States will take the lead in reaching an early solution to the technical and political difficulties on this issue", and its appeal to them "to make every effort to reach agreement on the conclusion of an effective comprehensive test ban."

The Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria considers that the negotiations envisaged in resolution 3466 (XXX) should start as soon as possible and with the participation of all interested countries, including all the nuclear-weapon States. We submit that, without the participation and co-operation of all nuclear-weapon States, it is impossible to solve this urgent problem.

It is also an encouraging feature that there is an understanding that the control on compliance with comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons could be secured through national technical means and international co-operation in the field of exchange of seismologic information. In these conditions, it becomes evident once again that there are no longer any insurmountable technical problems and difficulties whatsoever in ensuring control of the implementation of a treaty on a complete and comprehensive nuclear test ban. Its conclusion is dependent exclusively upon the political will of the nuclear States.

It has become quite obvious that the realization of progress in nuclear disarmament and the success in general of the talks in this field presupposes the consolidation of the régime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the reinforcement of the safeguards and controls of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This problem has acquired the highest and most urgent significance, in view of the widespread use of nuclear power and the real danger of rapid proliferation of nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

Another very pressing problem awaiting solution is that of the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The People's Republic of Bulgaria, together with the other socialist countries, adheres to the fundamental principle on the full prohibition of development, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction. However, in order to facilitate the attainment of initial progress in this field, we are ready to accept the approach proposed in the CCD to proceed by stages towards our goal, by banning in the first place the most dangerous and lethal chemical weapons. The work of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament during the current year has raised the hopes that, in the near future, it will be feasible to move forward in the solution of a problem which has been on the agenda for four years, because this is a field where conditions for achieving definite results are emerging.

In pursuance to General Assembly resolution 3475 (XXX), the CCD has prepared a draft Convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques, which is embodied as annex I to the Report of the CCD (volume I, supplement No. 27, A/31/27, pp. 86-90). The text of this draft Convention is the result of the joint efforts of all States Members of the CCD. It is an expression of the common denominator of their positions, and therefore it represents a viable compromise.

During the consideration of this item, several critical observations were made with regard to the scope of the prohibitive undertakings envisaged by the draft Convention and on some other political, technical and legal aspects.

But we should like to underline that, in our view, the draft Convention constitutes an important step towards the adoption of concrete measures of a preventive nature in the field of disarmament which deserve encouragement. With such an understanding we wish to reiterate our support to the draft Convention. We believe that the States Parties to the Convention will fulfil in good faith their contractual obligations under the Convention, and its implementation will be the best test for its effectiveness. On the basis of the initial experience acquired during the first five years, then, any improvements could be enacted in accordance with the respective provisions for amending the Convention (Article VI) or for convening of a review Conference (Article VIII). These are important

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contractual safeguards which should not be overlooked, nor should any critical remarks of an a priori nature lead to unjustified protraction. We appreciate the draft Convention as a stimulating momentum in the positive work of the CCD which should not be missed, and we hope that the General Assembly will adopt at the current session a resolution recommending the draft Convention and its opening for early signature, and we are very hopeful that a consensus on this matter will be reached.

We have been witnessing of late a well-justified emphasis on the necessity to undertake measures that would stimulate and make more effective the bilateral and multilateral efforts in the field of disarmament. As the general debate at the current session has confirmed, the overwhelming majority of States shares the view that, at the present stage, it is of primary importance to achieve a decisive turn in the efforts to halt the armaments race, so that détente in the political sphere be supplemented with détente in the military sphere. This is indisputably the prevailing opinion.

In this connexion we have recently heard much about the necessity to enhance the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.



(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

We all agree that the United Nations should increase its contribution to the solution of the imminent task of halting the arms race. It is precisely during the last few years that the activity and effectiveness of the work of the United Nations on problems of disarmament have increased. The very work of our Committee bears witness in that respect. At the last four or five sessions of the United Nations, important resolutions have been adopted unanimously or by an overwhelming majority. Therefore, would it not be more fair and more efficient that our efforts be directed now towards taking energetic measures to implement these decisions rather than searching for new devices or procedures? We feel it is very likely that, in the end, this could lead to a deviation of attention from the crux of the urgent problems of disarmament.

The experience of the United Nations evidences the length of time and amount of effort that must be devoted to discussions of a procedural and organizational nature. What is more, the endless debates over such issues, particularly those touching on disarmament, could serve -- and, in fact, have been already used -- as a quite convenient cover by those who do not wish to contribute to any progress whatsoever in the field of disarmament. Could we give credit to the assertion that the lack of will to participate in the efforts for disarmament, which some States continue to manifest are due to some "insufficiencies" or "imperfections" of existing mechanisms or institutions within or outside the United Nations? Does the real cause for the impediment to or delay in the implementation of a number of highly important decisions of the United Nations lie in these mechanisms or procedures? Let us take for instance the fact that, for more than four years, the implementation of the resolutions on the convening of a World Disarmament Conference adopted by an overwhelming majority at five consecutive sessions has been delayed. The idea for this Conference and the necessity of accelerating its convening has met with utmost wide and firm support both in the United Nations and among world public opinion including, as is well known, at all the conferences of the non-aligned countries.

The broad discussion on that topic and the exchange of views and responses by Governments all convincingly demonstrate that the conditions are at hand to

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

convene a truly representative forum, universal in its composition, which would discuss and negotiate in a comprehensive and thorough way all aspects of the problems of disarmament. In our view these discussions lead to the conclusion that favourable political conditions exist for convening the World Disarmament Conference. They give evidence to the assertion that the World Disarmament Conference will contribute to promote further the practical negotiations on disarmament and to direct the efforts of Governments towards the adoption of serious practical measures to halt the arms race.

And yet we have to ask ourselves the legitimate question whether the lack of suitable mechanisms or procedures are obstructing the preparatory work of the World Disarmament Conference. It is widely admitted that the Ad Hoc Committee on the World Disarmament Conference, which was created by decision of the General Assembly, did a good and very useful job. In this connexion, I could not but mention the great contribution to these results made by the Committee's Chairman, Ambassador Hoveyda who displayed -- not for the first time -- competence, a sense of responsibility, and patience for which we are all particularly obliged to him.

The latest report of the Committee (document Suppl. No. 28, A/31/28) shows that for its four years of existence an exclusively large and fruitful exchange of opinion has been realized, practically on all questions related to the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on the World Disarmament Conference. The representatives of 42 States members of the Committee, including three nuclear-weapons States, approached this task entrusted to them by the General Assembly with the utmost sense of duty. It is well known that the Committee has been in a position to adopt conclusions and recommendations of such a nature as to push forward considerably the further work on the practical preparation of the Conference. It is equally well known, however, that this result was foiled because of the stand taken by two nuclear-weapons States, which so far have refused to participate directly in the work of this vastly representative body set up by the General Assembly. Could it be maintained that in this case too, the cause for the unsatisfactory results lie in the insufficiencies of the "mechanism" or of the procedure itself?

(Mr. Yankov, Bulgaria)

In the opinion of my delegation it is imperative to continue and put on pace the preparatory work of the World Disarmament Conference. In fact, this acquires currently not only a greater urgency, but an especially high political significance too. Accelerating the preparations and the convening of the World Disarmament Conference will be a logical and essential complement to the discussion and talks that are actually held within and outside the United Nations. It is precisely the World Disarmament Conference which will be the appropriate forum where all States will be able to give prominence to their views on the problems of disarmament in their entirety while being able to discuss and negotiate on concrete measures and in greater detail for halting the arms race both in the field of weapons of mass destruction and in the field of conventional weapons and armed forces. This would be conducive to an exchange of views among all States on disarmament problems but also will set out the most effective ways and means for the practical resolution of these problems. In this way the role and contribution of the United Nations in the field of disarmament as the sponsor of the Conference will be strengthened.

That is why, we are particularly pleased to note, that the Fifth Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries confirmed clearly and categorically: "the urgent need to adopt effective measures leading to the convening of a World Disarmament Conference" (para. 138 of the Political Declaration, document A/31/197), while in its resolution on disarmament it renews its appeal for "early agreement on the convening of the World Disarmament Conference" (document A/31/197, p. 127).

We believe that this view will prevail and that our Committee will recommend such measures as will ensure the active continuation of the work of preparation for the World Disarmament Conference. In our opinion, the preparation for this Conference should be conducted along with the preparation for the special session of the General Assembly.

The World Disarmament Conference and the special session of the General Assembly on Disarmament should not be opposed as mutually excluding each other in the consideration of the disarmament problem. The experience of the United Nations in other fields could provide ample instances of very healthy interaction

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between the deliberations on certain matters at United Nations meetings as a prelude or a preliminary stage to broader international conferences on the same subject matter.

We are also convinced that the work to be carried out by the special session of the General Assembly will exert a serious positive influence on the further progress of efforts for effective disarmament and that it will pave the way to holding the World Disarmament Conference in the near future. In this connexion, as we see it, it would be quite logical when outlining the "programme of priorities and recommendations" for the General Assembly special session to keep in mind the acceleration of the practical preparation for and the convening of the World Disarmament Conference. Such an approach will be in full conformity, both with the General Assembly resolutions regarding the World Conference and with the decisions of the Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with the clearly expressed will of the majority of States and Governments for effective United Nations action in the field of disarmament.

We believe that such an approach will enhance both the role and the contribution of the United Nations and we hope that this will be the understanding of this Committee.

Mr. BUENO (Brazil): It is perhaps ironical to note that such a large number of items on the agenda of the present session of the General Assembly deal with the one major subject in which this Organization has achieved fewest results in the thirty-one years of its existence. But the amount of time and effort that is annually dedicated to this subject should in no way be construed to the discredit of the objectivity of the United Nations. Quite to the contrary, the largely repetitious yearly debate on disarmament is a clear testimony of how acutely aware the Member States are of the crucial importance of the matter, and of how increasingly frustrated and impatient they have become with the lack of progress in a field that is vital to their collective survival.

During the last general debate, the Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil stated:

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

"events in this hall are not independent from the real context of international relations ... what happens here reflects a wider political reality. That reality explains better than words the atmosphere of frustration and tension which at times prevails in this forum. The debates ... and the resolutions ... make equally apparent the hopes and the disappointments of the Member States and portray both the advances and the setbacks in the international political process." (A/31/PV.5, pp. 4-5, 6)

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

The history of our deliberations on disarmament has been a history of frustration, of disappointments, of setbacks.

Year after year the Brazilian delegation, among many others, has expressed its deep concern about the negligible rate of progress -- if any -- towards the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Year after year we have stressed the urgent need for concrete measures of disarmament, particularly of nuclear disarmament, as against collateral or partial measures of lesser priority on non-armament or arms control which, however welcome, are not the answer to the problem. Year after year we have stated that neither technical difficulties nor scarcity of time can be blamed for the failure to produce significant results, since the fault lies mainly in a lack of political will, especially on the part of those countries that bear the greatest responsibility for the constant acceleration of the arms race.

Inevitably our statements and resolutions have been to a certain extent repetitious, for there has been very little change in the situation over the past years. Whatever changes there may have been have only served to jeopardize even further the security of all nations. I need not repeat here the terrifying statistics, with which we are all too familiar, of the constant accumulation of instruments of destruction in the arsenals of States, particularly in those of the super-Powers.

We are now well into the second half of what was to have been the Disarmament Decade, and we have yet to see the results of the efforts that Governments were called upon by General Assembly resolution 2602 E (XXIV) "to intensify without delay ... for effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, and for a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

General and complete disarmament has been practically forgotten as the ultimate goal of international efforts in the field of disarmament; it is now not even the object of active academic speculation, and is rapidly being downgraded to a mere foot-note in the history of international political theory. Nuclear disarmament continues to receive the highest of priorities only on paper. Even as comparatively modest and urgent an immediate goal as the cessation of the nuclear arms race -- a

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

step that by itself would only consolidate the existing nuclear arsenals of the major military Powers and, for this and other reasons, would apparently be in their best interests -- even this step is clearly being postponed sine die, while vertical proliferation and the race for nuclear weapons systems of ever greater technological sophistication continue to forge ahead unchecked.

As the years go by it becomes evident to all that these three goals -- the cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament, and a treaty on general and complete disarmament -- remain an empty promise.

In view of such lack of progress in the field of disarmament, last year the General Assembly decided, in its resolution 3484 B (XXX), to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to review the role of the United Nations in this area. It is significant indeed that the specific mandate given to the Committee -- and accordingly the results of its work -- were essentially of secondary priority. In the absence of political pre-conditions for substantive progress towards the priority goals in this field, particularly nuclear disarmament, the Ad Hoc Committee had to content itself with the formulation of procedural recommendations for streamlining the methods of work of the First Committee and for the publication of studies, yearbooks and periodicals on disarmament. Although the Brazilian delegation did not refrain from contributing to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, it was nevertheless quite sceptical as to the usefulness of rationalizing procedures for negotiations when the essential political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon Powers was still clearly lacking, or as to the value of issuing further publications that might be reduced to reporting progress in the field of armaments, but none at all in the field of disarmament.

Some might find it convenient that, out of despair and frustration, the General Assembly were finally to desist from pursuing its special responsibility in this area, as set forth in Article 11 of the Charter, and resign itself to granting its annual blessing, in a procedurally streamlined manner, to the illusory progress achieved in matters remotely akin to, but not directly bearing upon, the fundamental problems of disarmament. Nevertheless, we remain confident that the General Assembly will not shirk its duty in this respect.

In fact, we tend to believe that the time has come for all Member States of the United Nations, including most particularly the nuclear-weapon States, which bear the main responsibility for taking concrete steps towards disarmament, to

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

engage in a frank and comprehensive reassessment of the difficulties that have impeded the attainment of substantive progress and in a realistic appraisal of future perspectives in the field of disarmament. A carefully prepared and adequately attended special session of the General Assembly would, in our opinion, provide an appropriate opportunity for this reassessment and appraisal. In this connexion, we welcome the timely initiative taken by the Heads of State and Government of the non-aligned countries last August in Colombo, now embodied in draft resolution A/C.1/31/L.7, of which my delegation is a co-sponsor.

Let us not delude ourselves that during this year the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) has made any move towards general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

Little has been achieved with regard to a comprehensive test ban. No change of position can be detected on the part of the nuclear Powers as to the question of verification and strict adherence to such a ban. Although certain measures have been taken, such as the creation of a group of experts entrusted with the task of elaborating a world-wide system of verification of seismological events, the stalemate continues.

In view of the commitments contained in the Convention on biological weapons, one should expect a more positive approach towards the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and towards their destruction. Some technical aspects of the problem have once more been brought to the attention of the CCD, but we cannot note any substantial modification in the approach the super-Powers traditionally maintain towards the matter.

It would be misleading, however, not to recognize that efforts have been made towards some sort of understanding, and in this respect we welcome the initiative of the United Kingdom, which has submitted a fairly comprehensive draft convention on the subject. In a working paper presented in 1973, Brazil, together with other developing countries, made clear the main principles upon which agreement could be reached in this respect. We were interested in stressing the fact that any understanding arrived at should not be allowed to create obstacles to the development of a technology for the peaceful uses of chemical agents, nor give rise to measures of a discriminatory nature. Furthermore, it should be understood that a significant amount of the funds liberated as a result of such a convention would be channelled to the economic development of developing countries.



(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has dedicated most of its energy this year to the study of the draft convention on the prohibition of military or other hostile use of environmental modification techniques. Ever since this item was introduced in the General Assembly, my delegation has studied it with keen interest, despite the fact that we consider the initiative to be a trifle premature, since we are still striving for agreement on priority areas. Our main criticism is that so much time and effort has been spent on this draft convention, the main objectives of the CCD notwithstanding.

None the less, the Brazilian delegation did not fail to participate in the informal group in the plenary meetings devoted to the subject. Since the very outset of the debates, we stated that, once the CCD had been charged with such a delicate and extremely complex subject in the field of disarmament, the deliberations should be confined to environmental modification techniques for military purposes.

The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has transmitted to the General Assembly the final result of its efforts in this area. The draft convention on the prohibition of military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques contained in the 1976 report of the CCD is a painstakingly negotiated document and, as such, inevitably falls short of the original position of any individual delegation. We ourselves are not fully satisfied with the draft convention, but we are ready to acknowledge that it constitutes a realistic compromise text. We would not wish to see the CCD spend another year, or perhaps even longer, on a possibly fruitless attempt to renegotiate an agreement such as this, thus pre-empting in practice the opportunity to move on to more meaningful negotiations. With this understanding the Brazilian delegation supports the adoption of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5, introduced last week by the delegation of Finland, which would open the convention for signature and ratification at the earliest possible date.

Let us hope that, once we have concluded our consideration of this matter, the same spirit of accommodation that seems to have prevailed between the super-Powers in the negotiation of this draft convention may soon be extended to the truly vital questions of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

The notion of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should not focus exclusively upon the question of the dissemination of nuclear weapons from one country to another, nor solely on the aspect of independent manufacture of nuclear weapons by a hitherto non-nuclear-weapon State. It must also include, as my delegation has always emphasized, the continued manufacture of such weapons and their increasing sophistication by the super-Powers. The problem should therefore be dealt with in a comprehensive manner as was originally set forth in General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX). Unless measures to prohibit the spread of nuclear weapons are accompanied by measures to halt the nuclear arms race and to limit, reduce and eliminate the stocks of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles, the question cannot be solved in the foreseeable future. Horizontal dissemination is and will continue to be a by-product of vertical proliferation.

This brings me to another important aspect of the same question. I refer to the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Much has been said about the dangers of access to nuclear technology as an indirect form of paving the way for the spread of nuclear weapons. While reaffirming our concern for the urgent adoption of comprehensive measures to halt vertical and prevent horizontal proliferation, let me point out that it has never been suggested that there should be a non-proliferation of science and technology. For they are not evils by themselves and, therefore, should be disseminated, particularly among those who need them the most -- the developing nations -- in order that such nations may absorb and benefit from modern technology. The fact remains that modern technology has revolutionized national capabilities, thus confronting policy-makers with an ever-growing spectrum of choices. Is it then desirable or morally defensible to deny the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy to other nations, particularly the developing ones?

As early as 1946, it may be recalled, the United States publicly recognized that no country could long maintain or morally defend a monopoly of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

No contrast could be more shocking than the one between the lofty rhetoric of countless resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the total absence of practical results in the field of nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Bueno, Brazil)

It is common knowledge among the members of this Organization that disarmament, together with the peaceful settlement of disputes and enforcement measures in case of a breach of peace, represent the main pillars of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

But because the history of disarmament can hardly be dissociated from a succession of fruitless efforts by those like Brazil that resist living under a balance of massive destructive capability, international peace and security no longer seem to be the collective responsibility of this Organization. Yet it is precisely the refusal of the many to acquiesce in the destructive capabilities of the few that prompts us to assemble year after year, here and elsewhere, to plead our cause and diligently work for a positive sign from those who hold control over unprecedented means of mass destruction.

Mr. RAKOTONIAINA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Once again, we have been called upon to deal with questions which directly affect the security of States. Once again we must say that lack of progress in the area of disarmament has caused us much disappointment and frustration.

Far be it from us to underestimate what has been done to bring about disarmament or to minimize the importance of those instruments which have been adopted or are being negotiated for this purpose; for all the progress that has been made in this area, all those who have taken the floor in the General Assembly and in this Committee have unanimously agreed that such progress has not met the expectations of the international community half way through the Disarmament Decade.

We are disappointed by the slow progress that has been made, not to say by the total lack of progress, particularly because the quantitative and especially the qualitative growth in the arsenals of the super-Powers is continuing unabated, and constitutes an increasingly disturbing source of insecurity, which States find intolerable. At the same time, we are witnessing a flourishing international trade in the most sophisticated conventional weapons, with cut-throat competition among suppliers on the markets of the third world. The way things have been going, the United Nations owes it to world public opinion to explain the real meaning of the Disarmament Decade.

Not a single State should abandon or slacken its efforts to bring about disarmament at an early date. However, the nuclear-weapon States bear a special responsibility which requires of them sincere and practical action, as well as voluntary caution in their international conduct.

Under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the non-nuclear-weapon States undertook not to acquire nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices, and the nuclear-weapon States undertook to pursue negotiations in good faith and at an early date on nuclear disarmament. Six years after the Treaty came into force, and confronted as we are with the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, we may well ask: what of the undertaking of the nuclear Powers parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

(Mr. Rakotoniaina, Madagascar)

While reaffirming the importance of a ban on nuclear weapons, my delegation must denounce the production of those weapons by States that already have them. At the same time, we are very much concerned about the threat of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, which has been created because some States are giving others the equipment and technology which they need to increase their ability to produce atomic bombs.

We very much regret that the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) far from curbing the arms race, have not held out any hope that within a reasonable period there will be a reduction of nuclear weapons, and even less that stocks of nuclear weapons and of weapons of mass destruction will be destroyed.

While the agreement entered into by the two super-Powers to limit underground nuclear arms tests -- and, more recently, the agreement on peaceful nuclear explosions -- may have provided us with some solace, we fail to comprehend the value of an agreement that authorizes explosions of bombs with a power of 150 kilotons. It is a matter of urgency not only to endeavour to lower the threshold, but also to achieve agreement on a ban on all tests. Incidentally, one wonders whether the major Powers really need to carry out any more such tests in order to maintain the strategic balance which they now enjoy. However that may be, those efforts should be undertaken within the framework of the United Nations.

Whatever may be the merits and advantages of talks on a more limited scale, we believe that it is high time that multilateral negotiations be held, involving all States. The nuclear Powers, which have thus far refrained from joining in the efforts made in respect to disarmament, would in the meantime have a chance to reconsider their position and, when they deemed fit, would be able to join all the other States in the newly arranged negotiations.

Bilateral negotiations have proved to be of limited effectiveness. They have been confined to questions of arms control and limitation, and have not dealt with measures that might lead to general and complete disarmament under international control. In view of the foregoing and in view of the frenzied arms race, a new approach by the community of nations, with the participation of all States, to the question of genuine peace and disarmament is now imperative.

(Mr. Rakotoniaina, Madagascar)

That is the approach of the Government of Madagascar. That is our approach to the convening of a special session of the General Assembly, as stated by our Foreign Minister at the present session of the General Assembly:

"The idea proposed at the Colombo Conference to convene a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament is a major initiative this year in this field. This is a reaction to the feelings of powerlessness and frustration brought about by the standstill of the Committee on Disarmament and the exclusive attitude of the majority of the super-Powers and the participants in the European Disarmament Conference." (A/31/PV.27)

The Democratic Republic of Madagascar, consistent with the Charter, according to which the United Nations should be "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations", believes that the Organization is still the right place for negotiations and decisions on disarmament.

The General Assembly has adopted many resolutions and recommendations on the matters on our agenda. Particularly prominent are those pertaining to nuclear-weapon-free zones. However, we have good reason to be concerned that at least some States have thus far been unresponsive to our appeals. It goes without saying that the value of any arrangements to denuclearize a given zone depends primarily on the approval of the States in that zone. However, it is equally true that the attitude of the nuclear-weapon States towards such an enterprise would decisively affect the implementation and viability of such a project. We should like to hear more from the nuclear countries on that subject.

The Government of Madagascar has given top priority in its foreign and defence policies to the establishment of a zone of genuine peace in the Indian Ocean, and we hold that complete respect for nuclear-weapon-free zones would be an effective way of strengthening international security. The views of our Government on this matter were set forth at the present session of the General Assembly by our Foreign Minister, who said:

"We reaffirm the validity of the principles incorporated in the declaration making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace, whose goals are to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region and to eliminate from it the great Power rivalries and in particular

(Mr. Rakotoniaina, Madagascar)

to eliminate the military bases and nuclear weapons introduced within the context of these rivalries. We condemn the seeking of naval superiority and projections into the Indian Ocean of defence concepts of countries which are not part of the region because they are a source of tension which is both useless and dangerous. We cannot accept in this region a balance of forces other than a zero balance in a context where the question would not be stated in terms of the maintenance or the strengthening of the military presence of the great Powers." (A/31/PV.27)

(Mr. Rakotoniana, Madagascar)

The Government of Madagascar has taken note of the statement made at the present session by the Government of the Soviet Union, which says that it "is prepared together with other Powers, to seek ways of reducing on a reciprocal basis the military activities of non-coastal States in the Indian Ocean and the regions directly adjacent thereto." (A/31/PV.7, p. 61). It is our earnest hope that the other Powers will react in an equally positive manner. It was heartening, incidentally, to learn that the People's Republic of China, through its representative in this Committee, stated on Monday, 8 November, that it supports the proposal to make the Indian Ocean a zone of peace and that it is prepared to assume the obligations relating thereto.

My delegation has deliberately confined itself to a few generalities in the course of this submission, knowing as we do that during the second stage of debate in this Committee, we shall be given an opportunity to dwell in detail on our position on whatever proposals may see the light of day in the course of this session. We know from experience that praiseworthy efforts are constantly made in this Committee for the cause of peace. It is our fond hope that the leaders of the entire world and, first and foremost, the leaders of those countries which have a primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security because of their economic and military might, will be equally enthusiastic about the goal of peace and we hope that there will be no lack of the political will needed to implement whatever the Committee and the General Assembly may decide to adopt.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I adjourn the meeting I should like to announce that Mozambique and Rwanda have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.7, and that Bulgaria has become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution in document A/C.1/31/L.5/Rev.1 and A/C.1/31/L.9.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.